

Preliminary Amdt. dated October 14, 2003

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

- 1                   1.       (Currently Amended) A method, in a messaging server, of connecting  
2 parties with mutual interests, comprising the steps of:  
3                    ~~providing~~ ~~presenting~~ a media object to be displayed to a first user;  
4                    ~~receiving~~ ~~accepting~~ a first comment from the first user;  
5                    ~~providing~~ ~~presenting~~ the media object to be displayed to a second user along with  
6 the first comment;  
7                    ~~receiving~~ ~~accepting~~ a reply comment from the second user wherein the first user  
8 and the second user are not connected in an instant messaging session; and  
9                    if the reply comment fits a matching criteria, connecting the first and the second  
10 user in ~~[[a]]~~ an instant messaging session.
- 1                   2.       (Original) The method of claim1, wherein the matching criteria is in the  
2 form of an approval indication by the first user of the reply comment.
- 1                   3.       (Original) The method of claim1, wherein the media object includes one,  
2 or a combination, of a video clip, an audio clip, a graphic or a text object.
- 1                   4.       (Original) The method of claim1, further comprising the steps of:  
2                    ~~providing~~ ~~presenting~~ the media object and the first comment for display to to a  
3 third user and subsequent users until a predetermined display count is reached;  
4                    ~~providing~~ ~~presenting~~ the first user with reply comments received ~~accepted~~ from  
5 the third or subsequent users; and  
6                    if any of the reply comments from the third or subsequent users are accepted by  
7 the first user, connecting the users having made acceptable reply comments to the instant  
8 messaging session.

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1                   5.       (Canceled)

1                   6.       (Canceled)

1                   7.       (Original) The method of claim4, wherein the predetermined display  
2 count is a function of a parameter settable by the first user.

1                   8.       (Original) The method of claim1, wherein a plurality of media objects are  
2 associated with nodes in a hierarchical topic network and comments accepted are associated with  
3 the nodes.

1                   9.       (Original) The method of claim 8, further comprising the steps of:  
2                   accepting an association from the first user associating the first comment with one  
3 of the nodes; and  
4                   presenting users' subsets of comments that are associated with a subset of the  
5 nodes.

1                   10.     (Original) The method of claim 9, further comprising a step of limiting  
2 the subset of nodes to one parent node and the nodes that are descendants of the one parent node.

1                   11.     (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein a plurality of media objects are  
2 associated with a concept, and wherein comments accepted are associated with one of the  
3 concept and a specific one of the plurality of media objects.

1                   12.     (Currently Amended) A method, in a messaging server, of connecting  
2 parties with mutual interests, comprising the steps of:  
3                   providing ~~presenting~~ a media object for display to a plurality of users;  
4                   receiving ~~accepting~~ a first comment from a first one of the plurality of users;  
5                   providing ~~presenting~~ the media object and the first comment for display to the  
6 plurality of users;  
7                   receiving ~~accepting~~ a reply comment from a second one of the plurality of users;

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8                    ~~providing~~ ~~presenting~~ the reply comment to the first user wherein the first user and  
9                    the second user are not in an instant messaging session; and  
10                    connecting the first and the second user in [[a]] an instant messaging session if the  
11                    first user indicates approval of the reply comment.

1                    13.        (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein the media object includes  
2                    one, or a combination, of a video clip, an audio clip, a graphic or a text object.

1                    14.        (Currently Amended) The method of claim 12, further comprising the  
2                    steps of:  
3                    ~~providing~~ ~~presenting~~ the media object and the first comment to a third user and  
4                    subsequent users until a predetermined display count is reached;  
5                    ~~providing~~ ~~presenting~~ the first user with reply comments received ~~accepted~~ from  
6                    the third or subsequent users; and  
7                    if any of the reply comments from the third or subsequent users are accepted by  
8                    the first user, connecting the users having made acceptable reply comments to the instant  
9                    messaging session.

1                    15.        (Canceled)

1                    16.        (Canceled)

1                    17.        (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein the predetermined display  
2                    count is a function of a parameter settable by the first user.

1                    18.        (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein a plurality of media objects  
2                    are associated with nodes in a hierarchical topic network and comments accepted are associated  
3                    with the nodes.

1                    19.        (Original) The method of claim 18, further comprising the steps of:  
2                    accepting an association from the first user associating the first comment with one  
3                    of the nodes; and

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4                   presenting users' subsets of comments that are associated with a subset of the  
5                   nodes.

1                   20.     (Original) The method of claim 19, further comprising a step of limiting  
2                   the subset of nodes to one parent node and the nodes that are descendants of the one parent node.

1                   21.     (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein a plurality of media objects  
2                   are associated with a concept, and wherein comments accepted are associated with one of the  
3                   concept and a specific one of the plurality of media objects.

1                   22.     (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein the media object includes a  
2                   link to the first comment.

1                   23.     (Original) The method of claim 22, further comprising the step of the  
2                   second user selecting the link, wherein selection of the link provides a list of one or more  
3                   comments including the first comment.

1                   24.     (Currently Amended) A method, in a messaging server, of connecting  
2                   parties with mutual interests, comprising the steps of:

3                   providing ~~presenting~~ a media object for display to a plurality of users;  
4                   receiving ~~accepting~~ a first comment from a first one of the plurality of users;  
5                   providing ~~presenting~~ the media object and a link to the first comment for display  
6                   to the plurality of users;

7                   receiving ~~accepting~~ a reply comment from a second one of the plurality of users in  
8                   response to the first comment;

9                   providing ~~presenting~~ the reply comment to the first user wherein the first user and  
10                  the second user are not in an instant messaging session; and

11                  connecting the first and the second user in [[a]] an instant messaging session if the  
12                  first user indicates approval of the reply comment.

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1                   25.     (Original) The method of claim 24, further comprising the step of the  
2     second user selecting the link, wherein selection of the link provides a list of one or more  
3     comments including the first comment.

1                   26.     (Canceled)

1                   27.     (Original) The method of claim 24, further including the step of providing  
2     the first comment to the second user in response to a search inquiry entered by the second user.

1                   28.     (Original) The method of claim 27, wherein the search inquiry is a  
2     keyword search.